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LISTENING GUIDE

The IEP Process for Secondary Transition



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INTRODUCTION

If transition planning is to be effective, all of the discussion and decision-making in the IEP meeting must result in a comprehensive, coordinated program that brings the parts of the IEP together to prepare people for the adult world.

This video will provide viewers with a five-step process that responds to all of the requirements under IDEA, meets the needs of students, and prepares students for the future.

IEP PROCESS FOR TRANSITION: “THE PAST”

The IEP process of the past follows a sequence of events that makes it difficult for students to transition to the adult world. This ineffective process followed three steps:

Step 1. Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP)

During this step, a series of stand-alone reports were given, focusing on the student’s deficits or problems.

Step 2. Annual Goals

Step 3. Short-term Objectives

Annual goals and short-term objectives responded to problems and deficits identified in the PLEP. Transition was discussed after annual goals and short-term objectives had been determined. Transition was a separate event and considered as an “addition” or attachment to the IEP.

TRANSITION AS AN ADDENDUM

When IEP meetings are conducted in this manner, it is difficult to see how transition relates to the IEP because it is

talked about after the majority of the IEP has been developed. If the student has not had an opportunity to talk about his or her goals for the future, this process is meaningless.

IEP PROCESS FOR TRANSITION: “THE FUTURE”

The IEP Process of the Future will provide opportunities for more comprehensive, coordinated transition planning. This process:

- Is based on student goals;
- Includes the student in all aspects of the planning and decision-making; and
- Recognizes the importance of having the students participate in the IEP meeting and engage in self-advocacy as part of their transition planning.

Participants in the IEP meeting must include the following individuals:

- Special education teacher
- Agency representative
- Employability teacher; Job coach; Career Skills Teacher (Optional)
- Mental Health coordinator (Optional)
- General education teacher
- Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative (e.g., an administrator)
- Parents
- Student

IDEA of 1997 requires that transition planning be an “Outcome-oriented Process” designed to promote movement to postsecondary activities of the student’s choice. It must be:

- Future directed;
- Goal-oriented;
- Based upon the student's preferences, interests, and needs; and
- Present a longitudinal view of IEP process.

IEP PROCESS OF THE FUTURE—5-STEP PROCESS

This process will result in a comprehensive, coordinated set of programs, services, and supports for the student based on the student's post-school goal/vision. The five steps in the process are interrelated and build upon each other. The five steps in the process are the following:

- Student's Post-School Goals/Vision
- Present Level of Educational Performance
- Statement of Transition Service Needs
- Statement of Needed Transition Services
- Annual Goals and Short-term Objectives

Step #1: Student's Post-school Goals/Vision

During this step, IEP teams should address the following questions:

1. What does the student want to do beyond school?
2. Where and how does the student want to live?
3. How does the student want to take part in the community?

Information for this step can be gathered prior to the meeting through career awareness and exploration activities and a variety of transition assessments.

Step #2: Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP)

The context for the discussion around the student's Present Level of Educational Performance must

1. Be based on student's post-school goal/vision; and
2. Focus on the student's strengths and identify relative deficits as related to his or her post-school goal/vision.

Step #3: Designing a Statement of Transition Service Needs (Course of Study)

The statement of transition service needs is an educational plan that is aligned with how the student is functioning and what he or she wants to do post-school. This statement is intended to help the student understand that the courses they are taking in school have a direct relationship to what they want to do post-school.

IDEA requires "For each student with a disability, beginning at age 14 or younger, if appropriate, and updated annually, a statement of the transition service needs of the student under the applicable components of the student's IEP that focuses on the student's courses of study."

The statement of transition service needs:

1. Is an educational plan that is aligned with how the student is functioning and what he or she wants to do post-school.
2. Documents the student's course of study and other educational experiences (e.g., job shadowing, volunteering, apprenticeships, internships) that align with the student's post-school goal or vision.
3. Includes required, elective courses, modified, specially designed, advanced placement, and/or vocational education courses and other educational experiences.

4. Is based on the student's preferences, interests, strengths, needs, and necessary instructional adaptations, accommodations, and modifications.
5. Should address State and district standards and requirements in the State for graduation and/or school completion.

Step #4: Developing a Statement of Needed Transition Services (Coordinated set of activities/strategies)

“Beginning at age 16 or younger if appropriate, the IEP must include a statement of needed transition services for the student, including, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages.”

Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that promotes movement from school to post-school activities.

The statement of needed transition services must be based on the student's individual needs and take into account the student's preferences and interests.

The statement of needed transition services includes activities and strategies in the following areas:

- Instruction
- Employment
- Community Experiences
- Post-School Adult Living
- Related Services
- Daily Living Skills, if appropriate
- A Functional Vocational Evaluation, if appropriate

During the development of the statement of needed transition services, the IEP team should address the following questions:

1. What services, supports, or programs does this student currently need?
2. What services, supports, or programs will this student need in order to achieve his or her desired post-school goals to ensure success as the student enters the adult world?
3. Is the student linked to the needed post-school services, supports, or programs before he or she leaves the school setting?

The school's responsibility is to help:

- Identify activities and strategies;
- Involve appropriate agencies; and
- Coordinate the process so the student's goals are met.

The statement of needed transition services is a long-range plan for life, and it must be reviewed annually by the IEP team.

It is the responsibility of the team to ensure that the appropriate outside agencies are involved in transition planning, and that there is coordination among all responsible parties.

As indicated before, the statement of needed transition services—that is, the coordinated set of activities, should address each of the following areas:

- **Instruction**—Instructional activities can include strategies for the student to complete needed coursework, succeed in the general curriculum, and gain needed

skills. Instruction may include secondary coursework, skills training, preparation for higher education coursework, and continuing education opportunities.

- **Employment**—Activities and strategies in the area of employment can focus on the development of work-related behaviors, the seeking of employment, career exploration, skill training, apprenticeship training, and actual employment.
- **Community Experiences**—Community experiences are the activities occurring outside the school building that will prepare the student for community participation. These could include community-based work/exploration, job site training, transportation, and recreation activities. These community experiences may also include social activities, routine appointments, shopping, banking, and interactions with government agencies.
- **Post-School Adult Living**—Activities and strategies in this area help prepare the student for adult living. Post-school adult living activities are those that are done occasionally such as voting, paying taxes, renting or buying a home, and accessing medical services.
- **Related Services**—The IEP team needs to identify the related services the student may need beyond school as he or she enters the adult world. The school should establish the adult linkages that will provide those services after the student exits the school setting. Examples of related services include counseling, orientation and mobility services, physical therapy, or assistive technology.

- **Daily Living Skills, if appropriate**—Daily Living Skills are those skills that adults do everyday. These activities can include personal care, preparing meals, budgeting, maintaining a home, paying bills, caring for clothes, self-help, establishing and maintaining relationships, and consumerism.
- **A Functional Vocational Evaluation, if appropriate**—A functional vocational evaluation provides information about a student's aptitudes, interests, and skills in relation to employment. A functional vocational evaluation focuses on practical skills related to a specific job or goal of a student. A functional vocational evaluation consists of information that is gathered, preferably through situational assessments, while the student is performing activities on the job. A functional vocational evaluation may include observations, surveys, interviews and formal/informal measures. Information can be collected regarding personal and social interactions, ability to manage money, mobility, personal hygiene, following directions, and the student's ability to complete a task. The information that is collected through a functional vocational evaluation can be used to refine the transition activities in the student's statement of needed transition services.

SUMMARY

It is important for the IEP team to summarize the activities and responsibilities discussed for all components of the statement of needed transition services. This summary is important for each participant so he or she is clear as to their role and responsibilities for providing services.

Step #5: Annual Goals and Short-term Objectives

These annual goals and short-term objectives are measurable and related to meeting the child's needs that result from the child's disability. They should be designed to enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum, as appropriate, and participate in appropriate activities.

IEP ANNUAL GOALS PROCESS FOR TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

This figure depicts a decision-making process that may be used for setting annual goals for the student. The following are the components in the decision-making process:

- **All Activities/Strategies:** This component represents activities and strategies in all planning areas—instruction, employment, community experiences, post-school adult living, related services, daily living skills, and a functional evaluation.
- **Activities for Next School Year**—These are the activities that the IEP team prioritized for the student for the next school year.
- **Education, Rehabilitation, Student, Parent, Others**—This component represents all the people and agencies who will share responsibility for providing the activities and strategies for the student. Those who assume responsibility for the activities will depend on the specific services, programs, and supports provided for the student.

- **General and Special Education**—This component represents activities in both general and special education that will be provided. Only those activities that are provided within special education will require annual goals.
- **Annual Goals**—The annual goals are derived from the activities for which special education has direct responsibility.

TESTIMONIALS

As presented in the video, this five-step process represents transition planning as a collaborative partnership among numerous stakeholders who will work to ensure that transition planning results in improved results for students with disabilities.

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